



Christians in Conservation

# A Rocha South Africa Annual Review 2007



A Rocha is an international conservation organisation working to show God's love for all creation. The name "A Rocha" means "The Rock"

## Conservation and Hope – A Rocha South Africa Looking Forward

Allen Goddard  
Director



Journals documenting biodiversity conservation in South Africa describe many setbacks faced and opportunities taken up in our sub-continent during 2007. Heavy metal contamination of the Wilge River catchment in Mpumalanga, runaway fires which razed exotic and indigenous forests in 140 000 hectares of KZN, Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces, and the degradation of three areas of significant biodiversity, in development projects for the 2010 World Cup are just a handful of the challenges in South African biodiversity conservation documented in 2007. These challenges were matched in their seriousness by the release of the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism's *South African Environment Outlook Report*. The Report's scientific assessment of the current state of South Africa's biodiversity, river catchments, arable soil, air quality, marine ecosystems and food security describes a tremendously vulnerable and fragile ecology at the onset of climate change. In addition to this, South African society, politics and economics in 2007 was marked by unstemmed HIV infection rates and HIV related fatalities, falling matriculation pass rates, rising unemployment, electricity shortages,

growing inflation, declining food security, volatility in the workplace, a debilitating decline in confidence in South Africa's democratic and criminal justice systems, and unabating violent and organized crime. Despite this context of great challenge, indeed crisis, A Rocha South Africa's Board and National Team have taken every opportunity to steadily increase our capacity through 2007, both in local community conservation work in Pietermaritzburg and in our national profile.

A Rocha's unfolding global and local story was presented to more than 2000 people at workshops and environment Sunday sermons in Cape Town, East London, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Stellenbosch and Margate, and through the distribution of A Rocha's Environment Sunday multimedia packs and publications. In February our first scientific base-line survey of plants in the Msunduzi conservancy area commenced. In April we moved our headquarters to new offices and the A Rocha *Created for Life!* Course received recognition by the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA) for academic credit, as part of the Seminary's core

curriculum. In June, the Rosebank Methodist A Rocha Community Conservation Group started projects in Cape Town. In December, Dieter Oschadleus' Community Bird Ringing Group at Rondevlei re-captured a Cape Weaver and a Yellow Bishop. Both birds had first been rung in 1999, demonstrating the value of this group's long term commitment to Rondevlei. Our national membership grew to 179 members, of whom 101 are regular financial partners. ARZA also welcomed short and long term volunteers from Ghana, England and Canada. At the close of the year our Board of Trustees committed A Rocha South Africa to appointing a CEO in 2008, to lead us from our local Christian presence in conservation in three South African cities, to becoming a professional conservation organization with a national presence. A Rocha's steady growth in South Africa at this critical moment demonstrates the reality of God's love for creation and the hope we have, in A Rocha worldwide, that our scientific, community based conservation work shares in God's care and hopeful purpose for the whole of his creation.

### **The A Rocha *Created for Life!* Course**

The 2007 course introduced creation stewardship training to Rwandan, Tanzanian, Malawian, Zambian, Zimbabwean and South African students in a five day immersion into Afromontane grassland and forest. Here are five of the course evaluation comments:



*James Roger, Daniel Chabala and volunteers commence the base-line survey in the Living Msunduzi Waterways Conservancy*



*Making food webs showed us how things depend on each other in creation*

*It was good to see people overcoming their fears of the forest.*

*the implications of our role or responsibilities in creation.*

*It was nice to learn how God views creation in the Bible. Many preachers do not teach about the importance of the environment and creation. It was an eye opener to me and I hope to teach other people as well.*

*It has been refreshing to learn how to listen to life in the forest.*

*I learnt much about*

***Live in Creation, the isiZulu translation of Phila Endalweni – Noluvuyo Mshumpela***

The year started with seven clubs in four schools and two children’s homes. The main focus of the clubs throughout the first term was school grounds. One of our schools, Merchiston Preparatory school worked hard and was awarded their first Eco-Schools Green flag.

In April I packed my bags to go join the Education team at A Rocha UK for two months. My first week was spent getting to know the area, the schools and the Minet Country Park. In the second week I became more involved in running the lunchtime and after school Wildlife clubs and school assemblies. I came back with a renewed vision for our *Phila Endalweni* Clubs and great confidence in what God wants to do through our education programme.



On 25 November we had our Annual Christmas Party for the children of Nikuthando Welfare, in partnership with St Matthews Youth. The children looked bright and colourful as the youth painted them with face paints. A time of games was followed by yummy eats and story time, then the best part - presents! It was all smiles and excitement as they said goodbye to their friends after a wonderful day.



## Financial Review 2007 & Looking Ahead

In 2007 unrestricted income did not cover expenditure and ARZA had to use reserves accrued in 2006. ARZA still has reserves which are restricted funds, intended to achieve specific donors' mandates, however, reserves for day-to-day operations are small. Our 2008 budget aims to maintain operations and anticipates a deficit. Concerted efforts will be made to develop ARZA's funding base, especially to enable us to realise our goal of appointing a CEO in the coming year.

### 2007 Financial Review:

#### Unrestricted funds

Income	312 849
Expenditure	334 336
Deficit	(21 487)

#### Restricted funds

Income	218 680
Expenditure	117 547
Surplus	101 133

Surplus for the year	<u>79 646</u>
Opening Surplus	<u>80 703</u>
Closing Surplus	160 349

#### Surplus consists of:

Unrestricted funds	3 793
Restricted funds	<u>156 556</u>
	160 349

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## Siyabonga! Dankie! Khotsong! Thank you!

A Rocha South Africa extends sincere thanks to Lady Sainsbury's Jerusalem Trust, Old Mutual Foundation, J. Leslie Smith and Partners, Jones & Wagener, Msunduzi Municipality, and Peter Golesworthy for your generous annual grants during 2007. We acknowledge with sincere thanks the donations and contributions in kind of 101 A Rocha Partners! Thank you for joining hands with us in community conservation projects that demonstrate God's love for South Africa's astounding biodiversity.

### A Rocha's Five Commitments

In all the countries where we work, A Rocha is identified by five core commitments and to their practical outworking:

**Christian:** Underlying all we do is our biblical faith in the living God, who made the world, loves it, and entrusts it to the care of human society.

**Cross-Cultural:** We draw on the insights and skills of people from diverse cultures, both locally and around the world.

**Conservation:** We carry out research for the conservation and restoration of the natural world and run environmental education programmes for people of all ages.

**Cooperation:** We work in partnerships with a wide variety of organizations and individuals who share our concerns for a sustainable world.

**Community:** Through our commitment to God, each other and the wider creation, we aim to develop good relationships, both within the A Rocha family and in our local communities.



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